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THE WATER-COLOR EXHIBITION.

THE Committee on Decoration, Messrs. Blashfield, Chase and Blum, of the Water-Color Exhibition, mindful of the gay reception that was to be held in the galleries of the National Academy of Design, have devoted even more than usual ingenuity to their adorning. The corridors and the stairway are roofed with canopies and gay with bronzes and potted plants. The north gallery is all in white, like a bride—the selection by the hanging committee having been based apparently on the principle that the more white mat the more deserving the picture of a place of honor; the hundreds of pictures rejected probably were frequently lacking in the white mat requirement. The east gallery is yellow and the big south room gold, with great Japanese umbrellas like huge bosses on the upper walls. The pictures themselves, the real heroes of the situation now that the dancers have dispersed—excepting in the white room, where the eye was dazzled to the point of confusion—lend themselves very amiably to the general arrangement, and are numerous enough and interesting enough to justify a couple of paragraphs on their merits.

The good ones are in a great majority, but the strikingly good ones are almost as rare as the very bad ones. There are no "new departures," but many skilful variations on old themes, and most of the work may be said to be conceived in the proper water-color method—that is to say, not too labored, heavy nor serious. The principal offenders in this respect are two or three of the largest pictures, W. Magrath's "Love Sonnets," A. M. Turner's "Girl and the Rose," T. W. Wood's two exhibits, and one of Mr. Brown's familiar bootblacks. The first named repeats a situation that Mr. Magrath has tried to depict before, much too evidently under the influence of Alma-Tadema: a large expanse of marble and two or three figures in antique costumes to make incident. Here the poet sits at one end of the long seat and reads from a scroll to two maidens who occupy the other end. The figures and all the accessories are most laboriously wrought, but the labor has not been lightened by any inspiration. Mr. Turner's "Girl and Rose" is probably one of the most ungraceful compositions that could have been made of these graceful objects; the head and shoulder and one thin right arm of the former are seen, and with her hand she arranges the flowers in front of a window or a screen. The little figures painted on this background have a charm of color and design which the whole composition lacks. In Mr. Wood's "The World is All Awry" he has made a careful, life-size study of a crying baby; in his "Visit to the Barn," the farmer carries the conventional little blonde-haired girl out of the dusky interior. C. Y. Turner's large "Don't Let Me Fall" is somewhat better than usual; the speaker is another little maid, who is also about to mount "pig-a-back" on the shoulders of her elder sister. Alfred Fredericks depicts with untiring care every pebble, stick and stone in his "Tired Out," but the weary mother is pretty and well drawn, and the very little baby squat on the ground is highly amusing. A. B. Frost's "Question of Time," however, lacks much of the spirit and good style of his illustrations, the fineness of observation and record in which, at his best, he ranks next to Mr. Abbey. Here is a darkey "interior," much in the style of Mr. Hovenden: on each side of the cook stove in the corner are seated the mother of the family, eying with some apprehension her men folks in the foreground, and her daughter wrapped in an old shawl and hugging the grateful heat in the transports of her "chills." The family concert in front of them has been interrupted by jars; the father, with his fiddle under his arm, rises in expostulation, and the son, in rigid profile, opposes an unfilial obstinacy to the paternal arguments. Mr. Frost would not have considered the situation funny enough for a comic drawing, and it has no other merits to warrant its being carefully wrought out in stippled water-colors.

The two most important figure pieces are Mr. Maynard's "Sirens" and Mr. Blum's "Venetian Market." In the former, the great blue wave that rolls across the front of the picture is alive with swimming, fish-tailed temptresses whose cool flesh tones contrast with the dark sea-water; in the distance is seen the sail of the rover for whose benefit these deceitful beauties have come up from their ocean depths. Mr. Blum's picture is more familiar in theme and treatment—one picturesque young girl poses upright in the centre of the scene, spreading her fan; another in the foreground, with a black head and a white dress, plunges her hand in a

heap of oranges; others in the background combine with other marketables and some discursive architecture to make a sparkling, cheerful composition. Mr. Maynard's smaller picture is rather awkward in drawing: one bacchante sits on the low wall and pipes, another lies indolently on the pavement. William M. Chase sends only one small picture, which he calls "Au Revoir." A lady in black, very neatly gloved and shod, throws her salutation at the spectator as she turns to disappear behind the yellowish hanging behind her. Much the most industrious of these figure painters is Irving R. Wiles, who contributes seven works, all of them interesting. In the largest, "La Cigale" sits on the lawn of some well-appointed country house, clad in some very loose studio drapery, with her guitar beside her, and a little bevy of butterflies escaping from her outstretched hand; in the "Sketch in Japanese Costume" the same young maid hangs some paper lanterns on some convenient shrubbery; in the "Studio Corner," she, or another, sits on the divan, and with a green veil over the lower part of her face poses as a light of the harem; in the "Siesta" she removes the veil and stretches herself on the couch. In "Pink and White" and "A Study in Costume," she becomes more modern, but remains cheerful and decorative to look at. Other pretty maids in appropriate raiment are portrayed by other painters: a "Patricienne" in silk, very carefully wrought, by E. H. Garrett; an "Interesting Bit," by A. L. Keller, in which she is reading; "Expectancy," by F. C. Jones, in which she sits at the tea-table awaiting him; "Tottie," by A. E. Sterner, in which from one end of the white paper she contemplates a small pug dog at the other. In "Launching the Surf Boat" and "Gull Island," the veteran marine painter, Edward Moran, is characteristically represented. In "Flatbush Fields," he shows that one need not go to Europe to find picturesque figures for a landscape. The brothers Percy and Leon Moran contribute various dainty sketches and studies of costumed figures, generally very pale in tone. One of the best bits of imagination in the collection is Otto Herford's "Little Girls and the Enchanted Prince." There is nothing but his gold chain around his bear's neck to tell of his former state, but the little maids have found him out and go confidently down the dark wood glades with him, each one grasping affectionately a hairy paw. And Mr. Sterner depicts two little Japanese dolls, one of whom whispers into the ear of the other some "Terrible Secret."

Of the realistic work, the strongest example is L. C. Earle's head of "An Old Salt," wearing a fur cap and pulling at a corn-cob pipe. L. C. Tiffany, among his numerous studies of various subjects, done in pale, transparent tones, has essayed a robust treatment in a group of a tin peddler and some possible customers, sketched at Seabright, N. J. His two scenes in the streets of Algiers are careful and ingenious without being as interesting as they should be. Theodore Robinson, just returned from France, exhibits a "Normandy Interior," in which a peasant woman superintends her culinary operations, and a "Moyen Age" sketch of a damsel in red seated on the ground in a pretty little landscape. The "Dutch Interior" of J. S. H. Kever, of Amsterdam, is a good specimen of the work of this school—father, mother and small son seated at table in a gray tempered light—and there are various landscape studies by Charles Mente and H. W. Ranger, in which they manifest the skill they have before shown in rendering similar luminous half tones by various clever technical methods. Horatio Walker shows a masterly cattle piece, with two pathetically wretched-looking calves out in a drizzling rain, and one of his clever pictures of a sow and her litter, which he calls "A Pastoral." Joseph Lauber's very pretty sketch of two unwilling little girls travelling slowly through a thicket on "the first day of school" appears also reproduced among the etchings. Mr. Shirlaw's "Fountain, Pitti Palace," in which two women and a little girl stand around the large basin, is quieter in treatment than much of his later work; and Mr. Beckwith's "Harvest Moon," held as a sickle in the heavens by some recumbent genius of the night, is graceful and pleasant in color. The portraits are not numerous; the largest of them is Mr. Freer's young girl in a white dress; and Mrs. Rosina Emmett Sherwood exhibits one or two smaller ones, in one of which the lady turns her shoulder on us, and reveals little but her cheek and ear and the trail of her handsome white ball dress. Mr. Lungren has greatly changed his style since he last exhibited here. He no longer paints in his Blum-Fortuny manner. His

new style is somewhat stiff and conventional. His "Snowy Night" effect has apparently been obtained by sprinkling his finished picture with white spray by means of a tooth-brush and a comb. Mr. Thulstrup sends a large picture of a gentleman in half armor inspecting his "New Commission," and two smaller ones, an assault upon an earthwork and cavalry skirmishing in a wood, while each fourth man in the foreground holds his comrade's horse.

MINOR NEW YORK EXHIBITIONS.

AT the third annual loan exhibition of the New York Athletic Club in February, the following were among the pictures by American artists and belonging to members of the club, which were publicly exhibited for the first time: Edwin A. Abbey's "Idlers in Holland," a characteristic little water color; J. Appleton Brown's "Flowery May," apple-trees in blossom; William M. Chase's lady in black, "A Visitor;" F. S. Church's lady with several tigers, "Knowledge is Power;" the late George Fuller's sketch, "Rearing the Donkey;" Winslow Homer's water color of lifeboat men, "Watching the Tempest;" Homer Martin's excellent landscape, "On the Neck at Newport;" H. Siddons Mowbray's illustration of the Arabian Nights, "The Three Calendars;" and J. McNeil Whistler's water-color study, "A Lady in Gray." George Inness was well represented.

Two important pictures by the German painter of genre, Ludwig Knaus, are on exhibition at Avery's Gallery, in Fifth Avenue. The larger, "A Child's Funeral," is the early work which first brought the painter prominently before the public in France and in his native country. The artist has treated his theme in the most graceful way possible; for he has given the greater part of his canvas to the group of young boys at the head of the little procession. They are passing along a sunny road through a forest, bearing banners and singing, under the directions of the old chapel-master; while the coffin, borne by older boys, and the more interested mourners are barely visible in the rear. The other work, "A Frugal Meal," was painted last year, and is much smaller, 22x30 inches. It represents an old man at his supper, and is a marvel of humorous observation.

A large painting by Professor W. Schuch, at Schaus's, is a good example of German work of the present day. The subject is the march of the ragamuffin troops of Mansfeld and Halberstadt, and the painter has made the most of his opportunity to depict many types of ferocity, recklessness, half-drunken jollity and bravado. It is like a page out of Schiller's "Wallenstein." The painting is excellent, making reasonable allowance for the too obvious conventions of the German school.

At the same gallery are three pictures of cats and kittens by Mme. Henrietta Rowner, of Brussels. In one of these several kittens are playing in and about a cage from which the bird has flown. The attitudes and wild expression of the little creatures are a study for lovers of animals. The artist's technique is bold and masterly.

PENNSYLVANIA ACADEMY EXHIBITION.

THE casual visitor to Philadelphia, entering the handsome portals of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, which he supposes to be dedicated to painting and sculpture, is somewhat dismayed to find the broad stairway facing him packed with ladies sitting on the steps and apparently looking at nothing in particular, and when he has carefully picked his way up the narrow aisle left in the centre of this congregation, he finds the picture galleries above almost equally thronged, the smaller ones crowded with seats filled with a rustling audience. The strains of an orchestra apprise him of the purpose of this gathering, but a dreadful sense of being conspicuous and intrusive takes possession of him as he stands in the centre of these galleries and gazes at the paintings so much beyond his reach. For the music-lover the situation is only less disturbing; the numerous and more or less contradictory canvases on the walls would alone be sufficient to interfere with that self-concentration which is so necessary for the enjoyment of sweet strains, without the constant brushing to and fro of the aforesaid visitor intent only on pictures. The latter, however, if he persevere and escape finally into the larger galleries beyond, will be rewarded, during the present exhibition at least, by finding a more interesting show than the usual one of the New York Academy, for instance, and unvexed by anything more serious than throngs of the pretty but unformed Philadelphia